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has been significant. Doubtless, he will realize his expressed hope that "this volume may have some effect upon the younger members of the legal profession in stimulating them . . . to a more active performance of the duties of citizenship". (p. v.)

WALTER P. ARMSTRONG

THE FRENCH LAW OF WILLS, PROBATE, ADMINISTRATION AND DEATH DUTIES. Second Edition. By PIERRE PELLERIN. London: STEVENS & SONS LTD. 1920 Pp. 90.

Mr. Pierre Pellerin has given in this booklet of ninety pages an admirable resumé in the English language of the French Law of probate, administration and taxes incident thereto. It is always difficult to make foreign law intelligible in translation, as civil law terms find no real equivalent in the common law. Mr. Pellerin is evidently well aware of this, and has avoided, where possible, the use of purely technical and intranslatable legal terms. He has given a good resumé of the fundamental difference between English and French law in reference to succession, which difference is, of course, incident to the different historic development in England and on the Continent, and especially due to the very different role assigned to the family unit by the civil law. The rules of descent, the formalities to be complied with for the making of wills and for the devolution of successions, and the acceptance of successions after examination into the liabilities involved, are clearly set forth.

The rates of taxes on legacies and some other details herein set forth naturally change with some frequency, and some of the items set forth in the tables are probably not up to date at the present moment. It would, therefore, be necessary to examine the French statutes since the date of publication in order to be sure regarding the prevailing rates of tax.

The rules of private international law applicable, and especially the very difficult matter of the theory of the *renvoi*, are succinctly set forth and a few leading authorities cited.

This little book gives a good bird's-eye-view of the general French law of succession. It is lucid and very compact, but, like all such works, it cannot treat with any adequacy of the very difficult situations arising, especially in regard to conflict of laws; and its main utility must be to the student who wishes to have some very general view of the French law on the subject of successions for purposes of comparison with the common and usual statutory law prevailing in the United States.

FREDERIC R. COUDERT

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION BULLETINS. Compiled and Published by the LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU. Springfield, Ill. 1920. pp. xxxiii, 1224.

This volume contains a series of bulletins prepared by the Illinois Legislative Reference Bureau for the use of delegates to the 1920 Constitutional Convention in that state. The pamphlets constitute an excellent illustration of the value to the legislator of legislative reference work. Moreover, with a general table of contents and index they afford to the student of our state constitutional law a useful source of material and suggestion. Our state constitutions deal principally with the organization, powers and jurisdiction of the three great branches of government,—legislative, judicial and executive. As might be expected, therefore, the greater part of this volume is devoted to a statement of the existing organization and functions of the legislature, the courts, and the executive departments, with a brief review of the judicial

decisions under the existing constitution, and an outline of suggested reforms which involve a consideration of the necessity for constitutional changes.

There is very valuable material, not only for the delegate to the Illinois Constitutional Convention or to any similar convention in other states, but also to the student of political science in the discussions of such problems as municipal home rule, excess condemnation, taxation and finance.

There is less in the volume than the general student would expect on some of the constitutional problems which arise in attempting to provide by legislation for modern schemes of social and economic reform. There is, for example, a résumé of considerations affecting the desirability of a system of public insurance for employees and a reference to the constitutional aspects of the problem as discussed several years ago, but there is no analysis of the concrete proposals of health insurance in this country or of the exact nature of the constitutional changes which they might require.

Many of our states, dissatisfied with piece-meal amendment of their constitutions, have recently called constitutional conventions. When the delegates assemble without some such preparation as the Illinois Legislative Reference Bureau made for its Convention, a very great part of the time of the delegates must be devoted to becoming familiar with the problems and entirely too little is available for intensive consideration of the details of needed changes and their precise phraseology. The work of the New York Constitutional Convention of 1915 illustrates the need for such preliminary studies of the general constitutional situation in the state. The Pennsylvania legislature of 1919 recognized the need of such preparation and appointed a Commission, with a large appropriation, to study the need for changes in the State Constitution and to make its report to the next legislature. It will be interesting to note whether this Commission, as the result of its studies, will recommend a convention which will have the benefit of the Commission's survey and tentative conclusions.

The Illinois Legislative Reference Bureau is to be commended for this very excellent summary of its state constitutional problems. It is to be hoped that similar studies in other states may gradually provide much needed material for the student of our state constitutions.

THOMAS I. PARKINSON

THE OUTLINE OF HISTORY. By H. G. WELLS. New York: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY. 1920. Vol. I, pp. xix, 648; Vol. II, pp. x, 676.

There is a close and natural affiliation between the study of *law* and the study of *history*. All our great piles of jurisprudence are historical accumulations. Precedent is the warp of the law. Blackstone's *Commentaries* are a mine of antiquities. History has likewise been an attractive subject to the greatest legal minds. Our most stately biography of Washington was written by Chief Justice Marshall, himself a maker rather than a follower of precedents. In addition to being an account of America's first public servant, it is one of the best histories of the epoch in which Washington was the principal actor. If the study of the law, as Edmund Burke remarked, is calculated to inform rather than to enlarge the mind, we may say that the study of history ought to supply the deficiency. For if precedent is the warp of the law, change is the woof, and history is the record of change.

But lawyers are busy men and the books on history are like the leaves of the forest. For these reasons, any general attempt at a synthesis such as Wells has made will doubtless appeal to the distracted searcher of reports and records. No one can read it without enlarging his mind—and also adding to